

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544
UPDATED 19 MARCH

WEAPONS IMMERSION STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE: These Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) are provided as a guideline in the implementation of Weapons Immersion Training into the Warrior Leader Course. The intent is to develop safe habits of thought and action when handling weapons, thereby reducing fratricide and accidental discharges in garrison and on the battlefield. The Soldiers' weapons will be in their possession throughout the duration of the training course.

2. REFERENCES:

- a. FM 3-22.68 (Crew-Served Machine Guns; M249; M60; M240B)
- b. FM 3-22.9 (Rifle Marksmanship M16A1, M16A2/3, M16A4, and M4 Carb.)
- c. FM 3-21.5 (Drill and Ceremonies)
- d. Air Force Manual 31-229 (USAF Weapons Handling Manual)
- e. STP 21-1-SMCT (Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks)

3. APPLICABILITY: Includes procedures and policies that are standard and applicable to all personnel permanently and temporarily assigned to the Noncommissioned Officer Academy.

4. OBJECTIVE: To outline procedures and responsibilities necessary to maintain standardization of Weapons Immersion Training with the Academy. Soldiers will be in possession of their assigned weapons for the entirety of the course. This guidance will regulate all procedures regarding handling and accountability. This SOP is an extension of mandated Army guidance for the implementation of Weapons Immersion Training.

5. GENERAL: Accidental weapons discharges have increased at an alarming rate. These accidental discharges are both unacceptable and preventable. Leaders will enforce the standards for safety, clearing procedures, and clearing barrels contained in this SOP. The III Corps and Fort Hood NCO Academy is committed to training and assisting Soldiers in becoming more familiar with and exposed to their weapons in order to decrease accidental discharges. Soldiers should become comfortable with weapons in preparation for a lifestyle that requires near constant carrying of the weapon.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES: All NCOs assigned to the Academy are responsible for complying with and enforcing the instructions prescribed in this SOP. SSGLs/ SGLs will maintain 100% accountability of weapons within their platoon/ squad.

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1-1. Safe Handling Procedures

Accidental discharges are preventable. It is the responsibility of every leader to enforce the standards for weapons safety. A significant number of accidents resulting in injuries and loss of life have been associated with accidental discharges. Leaders should never bypass the proper risk assessment prior to weapons cleaning, functional tests, and training involving weapons.

- a. Muzzle orientation is critical to weapons safety. Soldiers will always keep their weapons pointed in a safe direction. At no time should any part of the human body be in the likely path of a bullet. Weapons will be treated as if loaded at all times. Muzzle orientation will be enforced by leaders to ensure Soldiers become consistently aware and personally responsible.
- b. Weapons will be kept on SAFE at all times when not engaging OPFOR during the STX and when OPFOR contact is not imminent. Soldiers should keep fingers away from the trigger until firing is intended.
- c. Cadre and student leaders will supervise weapons clearing at all times to ensure that ammo has not inadvertently been left in the weapon. All steps of weapons unloading and clearing will be applied.

2-1. Weapons Issue and Turn-In

It is the responsibility of the SGL, the Armorer, and the Soldier to ensure that the weapon is issued and turned in safely. Weapons should contain no ammunition and should be checked whether ammunition was issued or not. Each weapon must be cleared before turn-in and at the direction of leaders. Clearing will be supervised at turn-in.

- a. The Armorer will verify each Soldier's authority to bear arms and that the Soldier is issued the proper weapon number prior to issuing any weapon or ammunition.
- b. The Armorer will ensure that each weapon is cleared and visually inspected prior to issue or turn-in.
- c. Weapons will be issued or handed to individuals with the shoulder stock assembly (butt) leading, muzzle elevated, slide or bolt locked to the rear, and on SAFE.
- d. The Armorer will allow only one Soldier at a time to approach the issue/turn-in area.

- e. The Armorer and/ or Small Group Leader must visually inspect all weapons, ensuring that all ammunition has been removed prior to storage.

3-1. Clearing Barrels

a. The unloading and clearing of all small arms will be done in conjunction with a clearing barrel. Clearing barrels will be positioned at all locations designated by the Commandant (to include all entry points to facilities used by students). The clearing barrels will meet construction, maintenance, and location specifications outlined in Air Force Manual 31-229 and FORSCOM guidance.

b. All clearing barrels must be checked quarterly to ensure maintenance of the construction standard. Documentation of the quarterly inspection will be maintained by the Academy Safety NCO. The Safety NCO will visually check for gravel settlement in containers, and ensure they are refilled as necessary.

* See Construction Standard in Annex A

4-1. Clearing Procedures

Clearing steps will be posted in large format, adjacent to each clearing barrel. Each type of weapon carried in the NCO Academy area will have its own description of the appropriate clearing procedures. In addition, all Soldiers will be briefed and provided written guidance of the clearing procedures.

* See Specific Clearing Procedures in Annex B

5-1. Weapons Carrying Positions and Phases

Weapons will be carried in the appropriate carry position at all times. There are three phases for carrying the weapon: Green, Amber, and Red phases.

a. Green phase. This phase includes the following situations and carry positions:

- (1) Formations: Sling Arms/ Present Arms
- (2) Physical Fitness Training: Stack Arms side of formation
- (3) Academy Area: Modified Reverse Sling Arms
- (4) Dining Facility: Modified Reverse Sling arm (weapon strapped across the back with barrel pointing down & to the right)

b. Amber phase. This phase includes the following situations and carry positions:

- (1) Training the Force: Modified Reverse Sling Arms
- (2) Land Navigation: Modified Reverse Sling Arms (weapon strapped across the back with barrel pointing down & to the right)

c. Red phase. This phase includes the following situations and carry positions:

- (1) Situational Training Exercise: Low Ready Position
- (2) Road Marches: Low Ready Position

6-1. Barracks Procedures

a When students enter the barracks, weapons should be cleared using the clearing barrels. Once Soldiers return to the barracks for Student Leadership Time, they will have direct possession of their assigned weapon at all times, to exclude when in latrines and showers. Soldiers will use the buddy system to provide weapon security when in the showers. If the weapon is found unsecured, Soldiers will be subject to punitive measures due to violation of Academy security policy. Soldiers will sleep with their assigned weapon.

b A Fire Guard will be posted in each barracks at all times between 2200 and 0530. Guard shifts will rotate every hour.

c. Expended and unexpended ammunition is forbidden in the barracks area. Amnesty boxes will be located in the Academy area. There will be no tolerance for violations of this directive. Violations will result in maximum punishment available to the command. **Cadre will conduct amnesty checks and shake-down procedures after every training event involving the use of ammunition.**

7-1. Classroom/ Dining Facility Procedures

a When Soldiers enter the classrooms and dining facility, weapons will be cleared using the clearing barrels. Weapons will be placed to the right of the Soldier's seat, muzzle towards the center of the table with the ejection port cover skyward. Soldiers will keep their weapons during breaks to the designated break area. Soldiers using the latrine will use the buddy system for weapon security.

8-1. Passes/ Appointments/ Sick Call

a. When Soldiers are signed out on passes, all weapons will be turned in to the Arms room prior to departure. Upon return, weapons will be issued immediately following the accountability formation.

b For medical and all other appointments on main post, Soldiers will turn in their assigned weapon to the Arms room and draw it upon return from the appointment. If the Armorer is not available for turn-in, the Senior Small Group Leader will be responsible for safeguarding and securing the weapon until the Soldier returns.

9-1. Daily Accountability Reports

a Each morning the SDNCO and the Student First Sergeant will account for all weapons prior to 0530. At 0545 the Student First Sergeant will submit a Blue-2 report to the Senior Small Group Leader Office. This report will be submitted again at the completion of the last formation (1745) before dinner. At 2200 the SDNCO will visually confirm accountability for all weapons during bed check. The SDNCO will annotate weapons accountability in the duty log. ***Note: In the event a weapon is unaccounted for, the student, SGL, or SDNCO will immediately notify the WLC Chief, who will in turn notify the Commandant. Every effort will be made to secure the immediate area and locate the weapon. No one will leave the Academy area without the Commandant's approval.**

10-1. Commandant's Intent

a. While attending the Warrior Leader Course, Soldiers will have direct possession, accountability, and responsibility of their assigned weapon for the maximum time possible. I intend to enforce compliance with the Army's standard for Weapons Immersion Training. My intent is twofold: first, to instill discipline and the "warrior ethos" into our future leaders. Our future leaders must become accustomed to having their weapons at all times. This training will add realism and increased responsibility as we continue to fight the War on Terrorism into the 21st Century. Second, this training will make Soldiers more familiar with their weapons and safety conscious, which will prevent accidents. Too many Soldiers are losing their lives and suffering injuries due to negligence and accidental discharges.

b. The goal is to prevent accidental discharges and unnecessary fatalities. To achieve this goal, we must train to standard, enforce discipline, and stay focused. We must stay alert and stay alive.

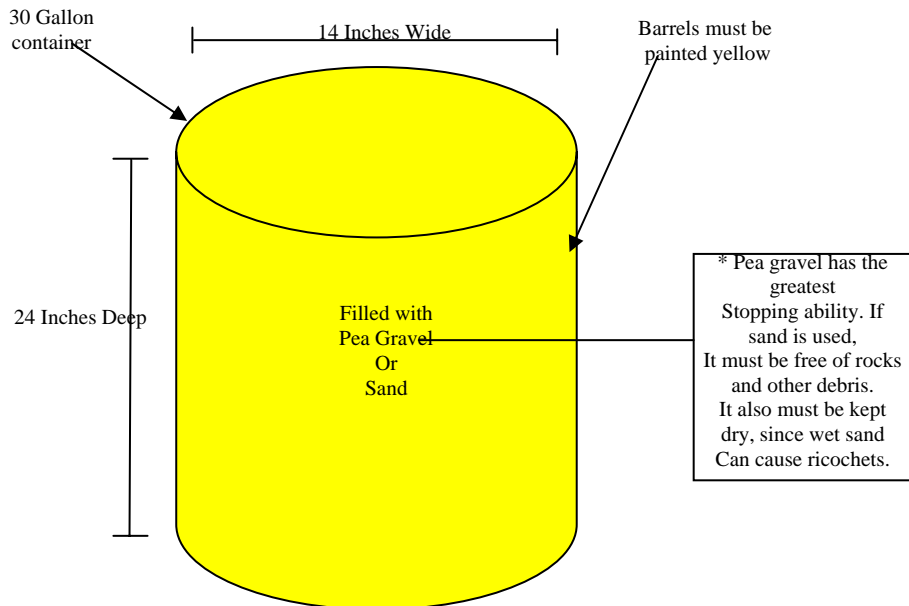
c. All NCOs will enforce the standards of safety and accountability. All SGLs will maintain 100% accountability of all assigned weapons.

Train the Best to Lead The Best!

ANNETTE JOSEPH
CSM, USA
Commandant

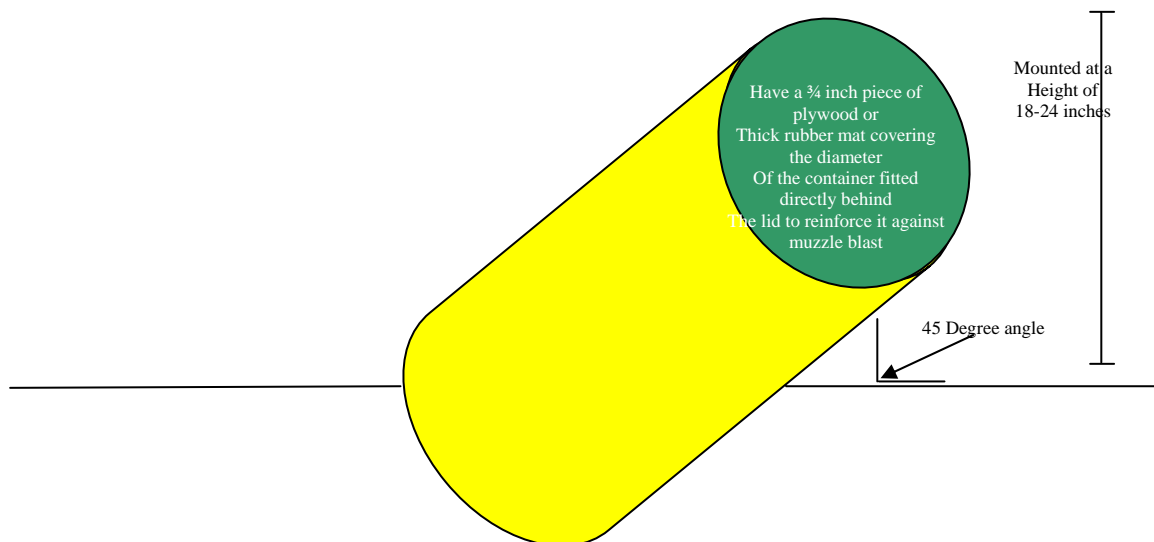
ANNEX A

Clearing Barrel Construction Standards (FORSCOM APPROVED)

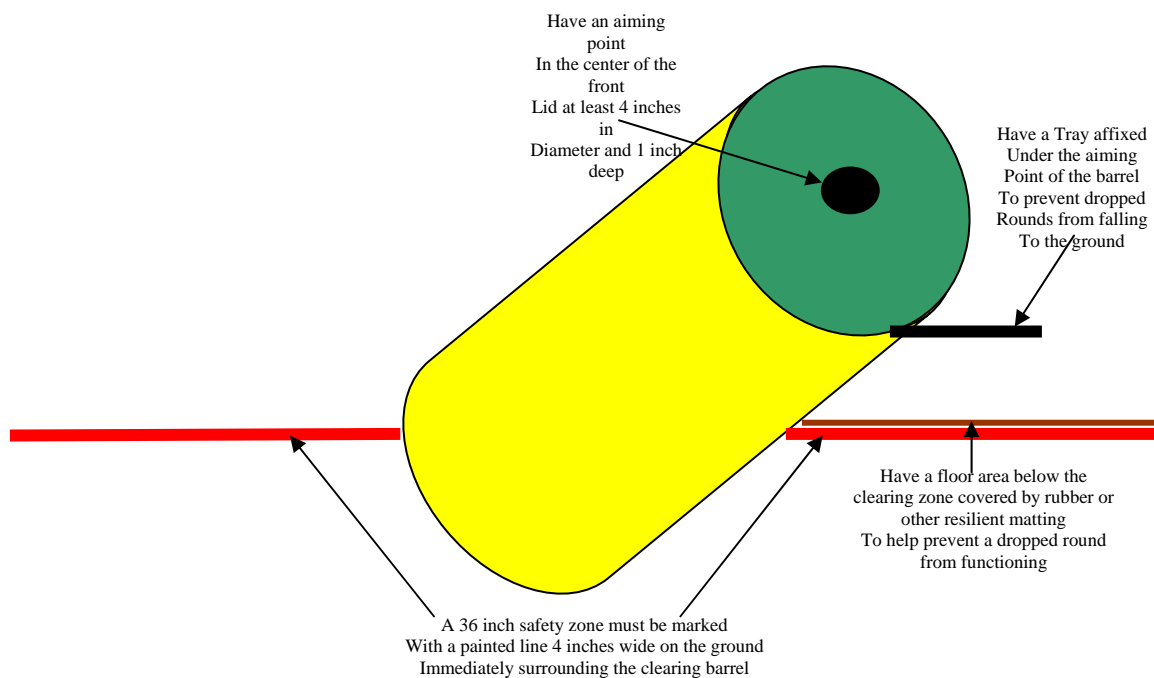
BARREL SPECIFICATIONS

ANNEX A

BARREL SPECIFICATIONS



BARREL SPECIFICATIONS



ANNEX B**Specific Clearing Procedures for M16 and M249****- M16 RIFLE (5.56MM)****Unloading and Clearing Procedures**

- 1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction
(Clearing container if available).
- 2.) Remove the magazine from the weapon.
- 3.) Attempt to place weapon selector lever on SAFE.
- 4.) Lock bolt to rear (ensure weapon is on SAFE).
- 5.) Inspect the receiver and chamber to ensure no ammunition is present.
- 6.) With NO ammunition in chamber or receiver, allow the bolt to go forward.
- 7.) Aim weapon into clearing container, rotate selector lever to SEMI, squeeze the trigger.
- 8.) Charge weapon once.
- 9.) Place selector lever on SAFE.

M249**SQUAD AUTOMATIC WEAPON****Unloading and Clearing Procedures**

- 1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (clearing container if available).
- 2.) Remove magazine
- 3.) Ensure the weapon is on SAFE. If weapon is not on SAFE, with right hand palm up, pull cocking handle to the rear, locking the bolt in place.
- 4.) While holding cocking handle, move selector lever to the SAFE position by pushing it to the right until the red ring is not visible.
- 5.) Return and lock the cocking handle to the forward position.
 - A. Squeeze latches to open cover assembly.
 - B. Remove ammunition belt and any loose rounds present on the feed tray.
- 6.) Conduct a 5-point safety check:
 - 1) Check the feeder pawl assembly under the cover.
 - 2) Check the feed tray assembly.
 - 3) Lift the feed tray assembly and inspect chamber.
 - 4) Check the space between bolt assembly and chamber.
 - 5) Insert two fingers into the magazine well to extract any brass, links, or ammunition.
- 7.) Close the feed tray cover.
- 8.) With the right hand palm up, pull the cocking handle to the rear. While holding the cocking handle, place the weapon on FIRE. Squeeze the trigger and ride the bolt forward.

ANNEX C

Sling Arms

To execute *Sling Arms* use the following procedures:

- a. From *Order Arms* with the sling(s) loose, the command for *Sling Arms* is ***Sling, ARMS***. On the command of execution **ARMS**, grasp the rifle barrel with the right hand and raise it vertically. Grasp the sling near the upper sling swivel with the left hand, and release the right hand. Place the right hand and arm between the sling and rifle and place the sling over the right shoulder. Regrasp the sling with the right hand so that the wrist is straight, the right forearm is horizontal, the elbow is tight against the side, and the rifle is vertical. Release the grasp of the left hand and move it sharply to the left side as in the *Position of Attention*.



Sling Arms

ANNEX C

Present Arms from Sling Arms

To execute *Salute* while at *Sling Arms*, use the following procedures:

- a. To *Salute* while at *Sling Arms*, the command is **Present, ARMS**. On the command of execution **ARMS**, reach across the body with the left hand and grasp the sling just above the right hand. Release the right hand and execute the *Hand Salute*.
- b. To terminate the *Hand Salute*, the command is **Order, ARMS**. On the command of execution **ARMS**, lower the right hand sharply to the side as in the *Position of Attention* and then regrasp the sling at the original position. After grasping the sling with the right hand, release the left hand and return it sharply to the left side as in the *Position of Attention*.
- c. When rendering reports or courtesy to an individual, the same rules apply for the *Hand Salute* (as explained in individual drill).



Present Arms from Sling Arms

Modified Sling Arms

- a. The weapon strapped across the back with barrel pointing down & to the right

Intentionally

Left

Blank